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THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA 1965 - By General K.M. Cariappa (Retd)

For some inexplicable reason some people have started a sudden hate for the English Language in India. Why, I do not know. The gaining of our Independence to rid the country of foreign rule did not mean that the language which our past rulers spoke and which we have been learning for many many decades should go too. I know we must have a National Language, in a country of over 600 milions with 15 to 16 different Regional Languages and over 250 dialects in all ; a language which can be spoken and understood by our people from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Shillong to Saurashtra to bring about unity amongst our milions to work as a team and help build the Indiaof our dreams - a land of INDIANS with plenty, prosperity and peace. We can have Hindi only for conversational purposes and school education, but why this urge to banish English from the curriculum of our schools and College is hard to understand. Let us not please stop teaching our children English. We will be doing them a great disservice and generally a great harm to our country in the future if we do not teach them this language from their early school days.

English is being spoken by more and more people throughout the country and in the world. Some of the finest literature in the World and thousands of books on Science in all its aspects are all mostly in English. We have been studying and do study these books and I hope will continue to do so in this language for the good of India and the world. A day might come as indeed it must when all books on technical subjects are written in our own National Language and Regional Languages. But this will take time- years and years. India is taking an active part in the study of Scientific developments, particularly in Nuclear Energy and this is all being done at the movement by our Scientists and Students in the English Language.

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Some may say greatly scientifically advanced countries like the USSR, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and so on, have not acquired their impressive ~~advants~~ advances in Science ~~all~~ by reading books on them in English. They have done so only maintly in their own respective National languages and so why should we not do the same. Such people forget that they are all homogenious Nationals with only one language which they have had for centuries, but India is not a homogenous Nation. We have some 16 or so languages also for centuries, but we have been studying the Ebglish language for nearly two centuries. We cannot have books on intricate scientific subjects in 16 different languages. This is highly impossible and impracticable.

At International Conferences, where India is being represented more and more ~~xxxx~~ every day where our delegates have been doing great work, most countries represented speak in English. The knowledge of English is a great asset to our delegates at these Conferences.

India is rapidly extending her world trade, where in many countries, English is spoken. Indian business representatives therefore who visit foreign countries in ever increasing numbers would find the knowledge of Ebglish language of great asset in their business transactions. Our country is becoming a Tourists' "MUST" in their iteneraries because of the glorious things we have in our country- things of historic greatness, natural beauty and works of great art and culture. Practically, ~~eveeryx~~ one of the very large number of visitors to India speaks English. If the thousands of our people, in all walks of life, who normally cater for the needs of these tourists cannot speak English, this big industry - the "Tourists' Industry" which can and will bring ~~kxy~~ revenues to our country cannot get the big dividends we can get.

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There is yet another good this language is doing us to provide for unity of India. It is in our Legal branches. To quote the words of the Late Dr H C Mukherjee, a well known Educationalist and who was once the Governor of West Bengal :-

".....It is very important in the National interest that the beneficial results which have been ~~accured~~ accrued from the Universal use of English in the different High Courts in India will be preserved, at least until all our Judges and lawyers have become familiar which the National Language. Among these benefits I may mention the development of an all~~in~~India India Bar and an All India Jurisprudence arising out of the citation of the rulings of the different High Courts every where in India and the consequent ~~interpretation~~ of All India Codes and the statutes on a sound basis~~y~~ as also the facility with which Judges have been recruited from different regions to man the Supreme Court. Judicial isolation of each State ~~if may be describe what would follow~~ from the use of the regional language by every High Court, will be a grievous misfortune which may ~~every~~ impair the political unity of India ....."

It will take very many years to get all the Law Courts big and small throughout our country doing their work in the present prescribed National Language- Hindi and in Regional Languges.

It was in ~~this~~ the English language that we fought for and gained our Independence. It has helped us and continues to help to easily establish and maintain our International and interstate contracts. If we neglect the continued study of English we will find it hard to keep up our rightful place in the commericial , intellectual, cultural, ~~international~~ technical and economic worlds of ~~technical~~ today.

Further, the current opportunities of scholars and others with degrees in technical and art subjects to find employment in central establishments and in other States will vanish because the present policy in some States ~~in~~ is that education will only be in their

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own respective Regional Languages. This will be the last nail in the coffin of "India's Unity" . States will then be flooded with tens of thousands of unemployed young men with high academic qualifications. A National tragedy which must be avoided.

In the circumstances we must continue to keep the Ebglish Language in India as an obligatory language. We cannot allow a false sense of Nationalism to make us bury this great language which we have been learning for more than two centuries.

B U T

I have a second and entirely different reason why I strongly advocate the retention of the Ebglish language in our country as the primary language, for all time. I know many an ultra nationalist is bound to raise his eye brow in horror and disgust at this suggestion. But let us please be honest and practical in our thoughts and in our action. We must look ahead, well ahead, and plan for the distant future in everything we do in our Nation building work particularly in this vital matter- the language.

ONE WORLD GOVERNMENT

Mahatma Gandhi's dream was the creation of a one World Government where all countries lived happily under no foreign domination but working in Co-Operation with each other sharing their haves with the have-nots thus providing for happiness for mankind. This dream has been repeated by many of our eminent leaders of today, very frequently and very fully. India wants a one World Government. If and when this comes off and I expect it will, at some distant future- IF all of us make an honest effort to achieve it, would it not be necessary to bring about some homogenity of thought and action amongst the 4000 milions or more peoples of this vast Universe, to work together for the happiness of mankind ? What else can bring about this homogenity better than a common language , which can be spoken and understood by these millions ? "Esparanto" was produced a few years

ago as the International Languages but it is only one ~~King were~~ making very slow progress ~~show~~.

It is still almost in cold storage, but the Ebglish language is being spoken more and more throughout the modern world every day. The USSR, Japan and China are belived to be giving increasing importance to the study of English.

I believe at the historic Afro-Asian conference at Bandung where some 28 African and Asian countries met together for the first time in history, the majority of the delegates spoke in English .So why should we not think ahead and accept English to be the International Language? We need not all learn this language in its entirity but basic English which has only some 800 words is all that is necessary. Advanced English may and must be learnt by Students and Scholars. So if we are really honest in our utterances in public of our wish to see a One World Government let us think well ahead now and have a flying start with this language business. What a splendid example India will be setting to the rest of the World if we can make the study of English obligatory from the very start of our children's education - including ~~from the very start of~~ of courses their own Regional Language and in Hindi too.

Some may ask and quite rightly too "what about our own languages- our own literature - our own culture" and so on " if we give English this prominence" Of course our languages will NOT be neglected. We will study them, keep them up much more zealously, particularly in regard to our classics and our Culture as ever before.

By replacing the present prescribed, but not yet willingly accepted by all ~~other~~ States, National Language- HINDI , which is still in its early stages, by English, there is no risk whatever of our losing our culture,

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~~which is still in its early stages, by English there is no risk whatever of our losing our culture~~. There seems to be a mistaken conception in the minds of some, that Hindi alone has all the culture of India in it forgetting that basically every language in our country has all the glories of ~~latter~~ our Culture. Hindi, Marathi, ~~Gugerathi~~ Gujarathi, Tamil, Gurmukhi, Bengali, Kannada and so on , These must continue to be studied properly and serkously in their respective regions with the ~~stay~~ Study of Samskrita made obligatory throughout India. For this latter I would like to see hundreds and hundreds of Patashalas throughout the country where ~~at least~~ elementary Samskrita is taught and the advanced stages of it being taught in High Schooks and Colleges. This is a very important matter in our education to help study our languages deeply and extract our culture from them. The teaching and the study of Samskrita must be worked out on a completely and thoroughly planned basis ~~or~~ at the highest level .

I do not see any justifiable objection to giving English the prominence I have suggested as long as the studying of our own languages each of which has rich literature is fully kept up and our youth are induced to learn at least one or two other languages in addition to their own regional languages.

For the reasons stated, I with all the love and loyality I have for my country and the love and loyalty I have for man-kind, very strongly urge that we should ~~about~~ always have English as a Language in Common usage in our country. If we honestly believe that this will help us in our service to mankind, let us take courage and be realistic and take a decision, here and now, and say "English will be given the prominence suggested". We of today and our future generations can then play our parts effectively to achieve and keep for all time peace and happiness for mankind, when the frequently expressed wish of ours to have a One World Giverment comes into being.

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By ~~good's~~ God's grace it will come. Nothing is impossible if we are honest and sincere in our efforts to achieve this aim for this great universal cause. Let us ~~that~~ therefore keep English as an obligatory language for our children from the very start of their early education. This will certainly be in the interest of our country in the long run. Jai Bharat -